Growth

It's a regular day. I numbly go through my daily routine, whistling tunelessly to stave off boredom. I act out the motions of my day but I don't really engage myself during the process.

As I am sorting my mail, I become aware of a faint sound. A gentle tapping, steadily, like a branch on the window. Of course it's nothing, just the sink faucet. I sigh audibly. As I turn off the sink and turn to walk out of the room, I notice a houseplant sitting dejectedly on a counter. It must have been a gift or an abandoned project of mine. The plant is drooping miserably, clearly close to dying. The dirt in the pot has almost crumbled into dusty particles.

I don't think I ever cared for a houseplant before, let alone considered the notion. Something about this particular plant engaged me completely however. I quickly got to work cleaning the pot, replanting the plant in better soil, and then positioning it where it would get a healthy amount of sun. It wasn't until I turned on a light because it was getting dark that I realized, I had just spent all day taking care of the plant...and I enjoyed it.

I don't normally name things, because I am bad at thinking of clever names. I decided I would call the plant Ron. It was a fern or some other kind of frond. It would be Ron the Frond, or just Ron to me. Another few days went by of nursing Ron back to health, making sure it didn't get too much water, and that the sun wasn't causing it to wither. I became obsessed with this dying plant.

A week of similar routines goes by before I notice that I have been talking to Ron while I take care of it. I have even been very open with Ron, venting my frustrations and melancholy feelings. Every day when I water him now, I spend an hour or so talking about the latest upsets in my life. It's nice to have someone who just listens without making any judgments. A week later, I stop going to my therapy sessions. Talking to Ron has been ultimately much more helpful to my spirits. Ron understands me, in whatever way a plant can understand a human.

Weeks of nursing Ron back to health while also critiquing my life choices has made subtle but powerful changes to my life. I don't feel as down, and if I do, Ron is there to listen about it. I'm sitting there talking to Ron one day, when I realize – if it wasn't for Ron's distraction that day, I would be miserable.

“Incredible, right Ron?”

Ron, of course, does not reply. I smile anyway, and open the blinds to let the sun in.